

# This is an official **CDC HEALTH UPDATE**

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## **Multistate Outbreak of E. coli O157:H7 infections from steaks**

This notice is an update to the press release distributed by the United States Department of Agriculture, Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) on June 29, 2003.

Health authorities in Minnesota have identified three residents with E. coli O157:H7 infection associated with steaks produced by Stampede Meat, Inc. of Chicago Ill. To date, 16 persons with confirmed E. coli O157:H7 infections in 12 states have been associated with the outbreak. Investigators have also isolated the outbreak strain of E. coli O157:H7 from leftover steak consumed by an infected child.

Stampede Meat, Inc. issued a recall on June 29, 2003, of approximately 739,000 pounds of frozen meat produced from March 17 through March 22, 2003. Stampede Meat, Inc. bears the USDA establishment code of "EST. 19113" and is sold under a variety of brand names. Stampede Meat, Inc. meat, potentially contaminated by E. coli O157:H7, has been distributed to retail grocery stores, restaurants, institutions and to door-to-door meat sales companies in at least 18 states.

Whole steak is not usually associated with E. coli O157:H7 outbreaks. The meats produced by Stampede Meat, Inc. are subject to one or more processes that can introduce surface contamination into the center of the meat, including needle tenderization and injection of flavor enhancing additives. The meat is sold frozen. Because E. coli O157:H7 contamination may be internal to the steak, cooking the surface may not be adequate to kill the contaminating E. coli O157:H7. In addition, because it is sold and stored frozen, the meat has a long shelf-life. The implicated meat has a "best if used by" date of September 13 through 18, 2003. Thus people may still have implicated meat potentially contaminated with E. coli O157:H7. Consumers should not eat the implicated meat and should return the recalled products to the point of purchase.

Public health officials at state and local health departments, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and FSIS are continuing to investigate this outbreak. Meat potentially contaminated by E. coli O157:H7 should not be eaten. E. coli O157:H7 infection often causes severe bloody diarrhea and abdominal cramps; sometimes the infection causes nonbloody diarrhea or no symptoms. Usually little or no fever is present, and the illness resolves in 5 to 10 days. In some persons, particularly children under 5 years of age and the elderly, the infection can also cause a complication called hemolytic uremic syndrome, in which the red blood cells are destroyed and the kidneys fail. About 2%-7% of infections lead to this complication. More information about E. coli O157:H7 can be found on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention World Wide Web site at: [http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/escherichiacoli\\_t.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dbmd/diseaseinfo/escherichiacoli_t.htm).

Consumers are encouraged to visit the USDA/FSIS World Wide Web site for details of the recalled meat, included brand names at: [http://www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/recalls/rec\\_intr.htm](http://www.fsis.usda.gov/oa/recalls/rec_intr.htm).

Consumers and media with questions about the recall may contact (800) 353-0933. Consumers with other food safety questions can phone the toll-free USDA Meat and Poultry Hotline at 1-800-535-4555. The hotline is available in English and

Spanish and can be reached from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. (Eastern Time), Monday through Friday. Recorded food safety messages are available 24 hours a day.

*The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protects people's health and safety by preventing and controlling diseases and injuries; enhances health decisions by providing credible information on critical health issues; and promotes healthy living through strong partnerships with local, national and international organizations.*

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES**